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CALIFORNIA PIONEER JOURNALISTS¹ FROM 1846 TO 1857

By Mabel R. Thayer

As Nature employs herself in each succeeding year in the never-ending task of transforming the face of this fair portion of its surface, so has man evolved his history in California. He came in small numbers in the '30's and '40's, attempting to bestow upon this new and promising land the aspects of a home. He found much to prosper and delight his tranquil existence, but he soon found that certain aspects of life in California refused to lend themselves to Eastern interpretations, and so it came about that just as nature left her stubborn crags to their own barren devices, so must he accept certain changes and limitations that the new life brought.

In the very midst of his pioneering adjustments came the days of '49, with a deluge of men and ideas. This was not a time for meditation. The pages of its history are crowded with action. Every man was out to make his own fortune, and social development proceeded amidst a hodge-podge of stirring events and wild excitement. Men forgot tradition and often good sense, but revelled instead in an atmosphere of superlatives. Even today California feels the influence of those "unusual" days. Without definite laws, legal government, or strong-handed authority, it was little wonder that events took on fantastic shapes and aspects and that a unique drama of history was enacted.

Because the records of those days of action rather than the written word are so pitifully few, we prize the more highly the efforts of the early editors who, though often but briefly, chronicled the happenings and thoughts of their day. When we begin to investigate the difficulties which they met and the dangers that they braved in publishing their respective papers we are amazed that they made such Herculean efforts to keep the chronicle of their times before an indifferent public.

1. Among the books and literature consulted in preparing this paper are: Annals of San Francisco; Everett, The Judge Lindsay of the "Idle Forties"; Chandler, Journalism in California before the "Gold Rush"; Cummings, The Story of the Files; Derby, Legend of Phoenixiana; Guinn, History and Biography of Southern California; Hudson, Newspapers on the Pacific; James, Heroes of California; James McClatchy Edition of the Evening Bee, 1903; Land of Sunshine: Old California Days; Napa County Pioneers; National Encyclopedia of Biography; Nelson, The American Newspaper; Scanlan, Some Aspects of Pioneer California Journalism; Shuck, Representative Men; Survey, vol. 30; Tinkham, California Men and Events; Young, California Journalism.

In retrospect it seems marvelous that so great a number of men attempted work in the literary field in the "days of gold." It is our purpose here simply to glimpse into the lives of some of the most worthy and heroic of them. The two men who jointly edited and published "The Californian," the first newspaper in California, are perhaps typical of the group.

Colton and Semple, Joint Editors of the First Newspaper

Rev. Walter Colton, a native of Vermont, came to Monterey as chaplain on the Savannah, a U. S. A. man-of-war. He had formerly been editor of the North American of Philadelphia. He was a man of broad culture, good sense, and strong democratic principles. Upon his appointment as alcalde of Monterey by the military commandant, he began to give his principles tangible form. He was astonished and dismayed to find that he had greater powers, as he said, than any judge in England or the United States. Everett calls him the "Judge Lindsay" of the "Idle Forties," because of his wisdom and good sense in dealing with law-breakers. He employed prison labor in building Colton Hall, a dignified two-story stone building, formed of rock from the neighboring hill. Its purpose was to shelter the school and all public assemblies. His proposal was at first scouted by the citizens of Monterey. He promptly fined each gambler twenty dollars to cover expenses on the school house, other than labor. Each prisoner was required to make fifty adobes each day. In the meantime they were lodged and fed by the government. He trusted them to work under their own guard. His decisions were famous everywhere for their fairness and because the punishment fitted the deed. He impanelled the first jury in California, which consisted of four Mexicans, four Californians, and four Americans. His dealings with the public seem to have made him feel the need of the people for a means of informing themselves concerning current events.

Colton found a partner in the person of Robert Semple, a man of quite different type and character. Dr. Robert Semple, as he was known on account of his dental skill, was a man to command attention anywhere. His height was six feet eight inches; and the gun he usually carried, and was reputed to know how to use, assured him tranquility of life. He was a very eloquent man of much self-assurance. His wonderful vocabulary was astonishing to all who knew of his lack of educational advantages. One of his brothers, General Semple, became United States Senator. Colton says that on the opening of their business venture, Dr. Semple wore a fox-skin cap and leather clothes.

Dr. Semple arrived in California in 1845 with the Hastings party in time to take part in the Bear Flag episode. He eventually became the historian of that unique event. It is said that his influence saved the movement from degenerating into outlawry.

Having decided to start a newspaper, these two sturdy pioneers began seeking a means of realizing their dreams. The only press available proved to be an old rusty one which had been brought to the mission from Mexico in 1833 for the purpose of printing church orders. It was necessary to scour the rust from each type before the "pi" in which they found the type could be reduced to order. Since it had been used in Spanish printing only, there were no "w's," so that various devices, such as using two "v's", were necessary until "w's" could be obtained from the Sandwich Islands. The paper problem was almost as serious as that of type press. At last they secured small sheets of thin paper, then used for rolling cigarettes.

They called the paper "The Californian." It was printed in English on one side of the leaf and in Spanish on the other. California news was obtained by means of couriers from all the military posts of Alta California. Abstracts from debates in the U. S. Senate were published, editorials covering broad fields of interest, local news, etc. The policy of the paper was a very liberal one, but favored the United States. "The Californian" was in addition the official organ to Commodore Stockton. The first number was published August 15, 1846, and sold at twelve-and-a-half cents per sheet.

Dr. Semple soon became a partner in a second business enterprise with General M. G. Vallejo. They promoted the new town of Benicia as a rival to San Francisco. So well did they succeed that for a time Benicia was larger than San Francisco. In a short time, however, the natural advantages of San Francisco asserted themselves and the Benicia boom came to an end. Dr. Semple's frequent absence from Monterey left the triple duties of alcalde, editor, and printer to his long-suffering partner, Colton. It seems probable that Colton saw the folly of the land schemes and that his difference of opinion hastened the dissolution of the newspaper partnership. Semple took over "The Californian," and moved the plant to San Francisco.

During the gold rush Colton complained that he, a general in the United States Army, and the commandant of the fleet, had to act as their own cooks and chambermaids because all the men had gone to war. Colton describes himself as presiding over a community of women, a few soldiers,

and prisoners. Even the carpenters working on the school-house left when they saw the second sack of gold.

Later Colton returned to his duties on a man-of-war, and was finally elected judge of the Admiralty Court for all of California.

Sam Brannan of "The California Star"

Another notable editor of this early period, whose paper, "The California Star," eventually absorbed Dr. Semple's Californian", was Sam Brannan, whose history is intimately connected with that of California in the Golden Age. Before his California adventure began he had spent five years as a journeyman printer wandering from State to State. In 1842 he adopted the Mormon faith. He became an elder and printer of a New York Mormon paper called "The Prophet." His active mind constantly drove him to new endeavor. While in New York he fostered the scheme of Mormon colonization of California. He offered to colonize for the United States, but the offer was refused. He gathered two hundred and thirty-eight souls who were willing to make the venture. He seems to have had some idea of forming an independent Mormon state, for after a five months' voyage in the good ship "Brooklyn" to the Sandwich Islands he procured many arms and much ammunition. Brannan had provided among other supplies for his colony, a printing press and equipment, flour mill machinery, plows and other farming implements.

Upon their arrival in San Francisco they found the country in the possession of the United States, so the scheme of conquest was abandoned. They sent twenty of their number to the San Joaquin Valley to prepare for a great colony. In the meantime Brannan had conducted the first Protestant religious service in Yerba Buena (San Francisco) on August 16, 1846. This service was held in Captain Richardson's large house. In his sermon he urged his hearers to stand true to the Mormon faith. In later years, however, he himself ceased to follow that admonition. He was a terse and fluent speaker and must have been a man of great personal magnetism if one may judge from his influence over others wherever he went.

January 7, 1847, Brannan established the "California Star" in San Francisco. He promised that his organ would be nonsectarian. One object of his publication was to induce people to come to California. He had a committee prepare an article entitled "The Prospects of California," which he published in an extra, April 1, 1848. He employed a special carrier to convey two thousand copies to Missouri within sixty days. This issue treated the discovery of gold

as of no importance. He had planned to publish a second extra in June, but by that time every one had gone to the mines.

He regularly collected tithes from this group of California Mormons, and it was because of a dispute over these tithes that his estrangement from the Mormon church occurred. In the meantime, during the year 1847, he had gone to Salt Lake to meet Brigham Young and the main body of the colony which was coming by the overland route. Keen was Brannan's disappointment when they decided to locate at the Great Salt Lake. That same year the Sam Brannan Company, under which name the Mormon project had been conducted, was dissolved. Brannan himself erected two flour mills and engaged in farming in the San Joaquin Valley.

When gold was discovered he went to the American River and secured a bottle of it. Upon his return he expeditied the exodus from sleepy villages by riding through the streets waving his hat in one hand and the bottle of gold dust in the other, shouting "Gold! gold! gold! from the American River." At no point in his astonishing career does his native shrewdness show itself more plainly than at this hour of madness. Instead of attempting to find a fortune, a free gift from Nature, he proceeded to gather a stock of goods for a store, while other men rushed madly to the mountains. He established the only store in the Sacramento Valley at Sutter's Fort. During 1848 and 1849 his average sales were one hundred and fifty thousand dollars monthly, and he was soon the wealthiest man in California. In '49 he began to deal in San Francisco and Sacramento lands and started trade operations with China and the Sandwich Islands.

As the Mormons found gold in the mountains, Brannan insisted that they turn ten per cent over to him, as the representative of the Mormon Church. The sum was so great that it led to a squabble with the heads of the Mormon Church in Utah, to whom Brannan refused to pay any tithes, and seems to have been the cause of Brannan's abandonment of religion. His habits gradually changed and he fell to some extent under the curse of drink. His investments gradually became less profitable, and his "golden touch" failed in its magic.

In 1859 he removed to the Napa Valley where he acquired two thousand acres of land, including the Hot Springs. Here he spent about half a million dollars in an attempt to make a Saratoga of the Pacific. Many financial reverses followed. He finally died in Escondido, Mexico,

thirty years later. Perhaps no life was more typical than his of the strength and weakness of the Golden Age of California in things both social and financial.

The Joint Editors of the "Golden Era"

Perhaps the most remarkable paper of early California was the "Golden Era." During the gold rush the warm, human touch of its paragraphs comforted many a homesick heart and its rare engravings decorated the walls of many a lonely cabin. It numbered among its contributors, Bret Harte and Samuel L. Clemens. Horace Greeley paid high tribute to its remarkable character. It was founded in 1852 by Macdonough Foard, of the mature age of twenty-one years, and his junior, Rollin M. Daggett, nineteen years of age. Daggett, clad in red flannel shirt and top boots, went among the miners and secured an astonishing list of subscriptions at five dollars each. Daggett was responsible for many bright sketches concerning his experiences in crossing the plains on foot in 1849. In addition he is credited with various works of fiction. After ten years as editor of the "Golden Era" he moved to Virginia City, Nevada, where he was elected to the Territorial Council in 1863. From 1882 to 1885 he served as minister to Hawaii from the United States.

Ames of the "San Diego Herald"

It was in San Diego that another man of remarkable character started a newspaper long before the community seemed to hold any prospect of success for such a venture. Perhaps one of John Judson Ames's incentives to such an undertaking was the candidacy of Gwin for the United States Senate. Gwin supported Ames in many ways and in turn received support of the "San Diego Herald."

Ames was born in Calaise, Maine, in the year 1821. His father being a ship builder and owner, young Ames made a voyage to Liverpool in one of his ships. Ames was a man to command attention anywhere, being six feet six-and-one-half inches tall, and of great strength. When his ship returned to Boston it was boarded by sail boarding-house runners and in the fight that followed Ames struck a man with such force that he died. Ames was tried and given a long jail sentence, but was finally pardoned by President Taylor. This experience seems to have sobered him for a time at least. He went to school and became a journalist. "The Dime Catcher" was started by him in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in 1848. It was a Whig organ.

When the gold fever spread over the United States he came to California via Panama, reaching San Francisco, October 28, 1849. He was without cash when he arrived,

and set about making good this shortage by borrowing a hand cart and moving baggage. His great size and strength stood him in good stead here as in many experiences later. The first quarter thus earned became his pocket lucky piece in years following. Ames found fellow Masons in San Francisco and formed some strong friendships. He was present at the first Masonic lodge meeting. It was here that he began to write under the pen name of "Boston."

His determination to establish a newspaper in San Diego caused him to return to the East, where he supplied himself with equipment and supplies for a printing office. In order to expedite the journey he determined to ship his equipment across Panama. He secured a small boat and native rowers to convey them up the Chagres River. As they swung past the tropical forest where bright birds and insects flashed among the green creepers, their hearts must have been light with the joy of living. As they skimmed swiftly along the shallow, placid stream, the boat suddenly gave a fearful lurch as it ran against a snag, and a part of the casting was lost overboard. The boat was finally loosened from its perilous situation, the hole was repaired, and the natives standing in the water attempted to lift the heavy metal back into the boat. All day long under the tropic sun, half-blinded by the dancing reflections of the water, they tugged and worked, but to no avail. Every hour Ames grew more impatient. He knew that every minute lost increased his possibility of being left behind when the boat for San Diego sailed from the Isthmus. Finally his impatience burst all bounds. He leaped into the water, throwing the natives right and left. In awe they watched him put his powerful hands beneath the crate, and straightening to his great height, lifting the heavy weight to its place in the boat. In their fear not one of them had lent him a hand in the feat. Although they continued speedily on their way, the time lost was fatal to his plans, and upon arriving at the Pacific side he found that the San Diego boat had sailed on its way without him. While waiting for another boat he published the "Panama Herald."

The only alternative was to take a steamer to San Francisco, and then take another boat back to San Diego. While awaiting a boat in San Francisco the fire of 1851 consumed part of his stores. His trip seems to have been a very unlucky one. Replenishing his supply as best he could, he finally made his way to San Diego, where he started the "San Diego Herald" that same year. He was then thirty years of age. Through Senator Gwin and other friends he

received much San Francisco advertising. Although Gwin was senator from 1849 to 1860, he did not keep his promises to Ames, which embittered the latter somewhat.

The "Herald" was a vigorous, though sometimes erratic paper. Its policy included the annexation of Lower California and the Sandwich Islands, the construction of a continental railroad with San Diego as a terminal, and the division of California.

It was Ames' habit to spend much of his time in San Francisco, writing long letters from there to be published in the "Herald", which he left in charge of the foreman or some friend. At one time while he was away a man by the name of Walton took possession of the paper and published it without Ames' knowledge or consent, injuring his equipment and reputation as well. When Walton heard of Ames' return, he disappeared, but was later arrested in Portland for robbery. At as early a date as this the policy of suppressing disagreeable news had found a foothold. Thus very valuable data have been lost. The difficulty of getting news of any sort was great because the mail service was only semi-monthly and there was no telegraph or telephone. Even paper was at a premium. Several times it was necessary to print the "Herald" on wrapping paper.

Ames had many personal sorrows while at San Diego. His wife died in 1857, and while he was at San Francisco, her monument was mutilated, and his house was blown down. He became dissipated and broken in health. He married again two or three years later. When he found that Gwin's star was on the wane, and that San Diego was not as prosperous as San Bernardino, he determined to move his paper to the latter place. He published the last issue of the "San Diego Herald" on April 7, 1860. The "San Bernardino Herald" was not a success, and Ames finally sold the paper to Major Sherman. Ames died in 1861, but the press which had served him so well is still used in Inyo County.

Derby, Engineer and Humorist

No biography of Ames can be completed without mention of his friend, Lieut. George H. Derby, who in addition to being a sanitary engineer of very high standing, for the government, was a literary man, journalist, cartoonist, and humorist of no mean ability. The fact that he sometimes relieved the monotony of San Diego life by turning the vials of his wit and his practical jokes upon Ames did not seem to interfere with their friendship in the least.

George Derby was a native of Dedham, Massachusetts, born April 3, 1823. He was a great-grandson of a Salem

shipping merchant and son of an eccentric character of Boston. George claimed to have been expelled from school for having recited one of Kendrick Bang's poems at some school exercises. At any rate his standard of scholarship must have been high, for he entered West Point and was graduated in 1846, being appointed second lieutenant of ordnance; but he was soon transferred to the topographical engineers. He made a survey of the harbor of New Bedford, Massachusetts.

When war broke out with Mexico he was ordered there, took part in the siege of Vera Cruz, and was wounded in the battle of Cerro Gordo. He was brevetted first lieutenant for gallant conduct and was stationed in the topographical office in Washington until he had wholly recovered from his wound. He made surveys in the West, including Minnesota. Amidst all his heavy toil and serious labors, he sought outlet for his genial, sunny disposition and high spirits by humorous excursions with his ever-ready pen. Poetry, humorous sketches, skits of travel, and side-splitting cartoons and jokes added much to the sum of human happiness. He wrote in the style of Mark Twain ere Samuel Clemens had begun. With delicacy of touch and sureness of aim he showed the humorous side of the conventionality of the East. One of his excursions into this realm caused him no small inconvenience and some heartache.

While Jefferson Davis was Secretary of War from 1853-57, he made several changes in the style of army uniforms. These changes were unpopular with the men and raised a storm of criticism on account of the expense involved. Derby no doubt was as much exasperated as the other officers, and in a mood of jest made a series of cartoons suggesting other changes which might add to the utility of the said uniforms. Among others was that of an iron hook attached to the trousers of the uniform. When the men were marching a pole could be laid along in a row of these hooks, thus keeping the men in a straight line; if the weather were bad, the officers could hang the men along the fences at night to obviate the necessity of sleeping in the mud; at other times the kettles could be hung on them. These cartoons he mailed to Jefferson Davis with a letter couched in terms of mild irony.

The Secretary of War had no sense of humor, but he did have a temper which flamed when he read this supposed insult to his great dignity as a cabinet member. He brought the infamous documents into a meeting of the cabinet, threatening to have Derby courtmartialed and dismissed in disgrace, or something worse. The effect upon the cabinet

was quite a different one. All decorum was lost in shouts of laughter as the offending cartoons were studied. They were sobered, however, when they found that the Secretary of War was determined to punish Derby. It took their combined efforts to prove to Secretary Davis that any such trial would make him, Jefferson Davis, the laughing stock of the entire nation. He did not rest, however, until he had had Derby "banished" by a transfer to the farthest point in the United States, namely San Diego, where he was to turn the channel of the San Diego River.

Here in this sleepy settlement where even a ship seldom touched oftener than once in two weeks, he found his leisure time hang heavily on his hands. It is little wonder that he turned to the gigantic editor of the "Herald" for companionship. Their literary tastes and common interests along journalistic lines soon cemented their friendship firmly.

One day during Bigler's campaign for the governorship and while the "Herald" was lending him enthusiastic support, Ames decided to go to San Francisco to try to secure a subsidy for his paper from Bigler supporters. He called upon his friend Derby to act as editor of the "Herald" and promised to be away but two weeks. He was well aware that Derby was capable of running the paper as well or better than it had ever been run by himself or any one else, and so he left no directions in regard to its policy. There must have been a twinkle in Derby's eyes as he watched the towering form of his friend make its way aboard the San Francisco boat.

Left to his own devices, Derby proceeded to write an editorial in which he set forth his position as editor without warning or instructions. He conveyed the idea that he was rather at a loss as to how to conduct a paper. Having put this innocent face upon the matter, he proceeded to reverse the political policy of the paper. Dubbing candidate Bigler by the undignified appellation of "Wigler," he proceeded to hold him up to the scorn and ridicule of the "Herald" subscribers. Ames lengthened his stay to six weeks, a six weeks in which his friend revelled in the discomfort of "Wigler." After the election was over the editor pro tem boasted that only one man in San Diego had voted for "Wigler," and he was found "dead drunk" behind a building. The remaining issues were filled with surmises as to what Ames would do when he returned, and when he finally did appear the "Herald" published a fire-and-brimstone account of the fight that ensued, and then informed the reader that he might believe all, or any por-

tion of the story that he chose, or none of it at all. It seems that this practical joke did not greatly disturb the friendship of the men. It had one consequence, however, that Derby did not anticipate. While Ames was working among the San Francisco politicians trying to get a subsidy for his paper, one of them confronted him with a copy of the "Herald" which concerned itself with the candidate "Wigler." Needless to say any hope of a subsidy was lost.

During 1854-56 Derby was on the staff of the commanding general of the department of the Pacific, having charge of military roads. The year 1856 ended his "exile", and he was promoted to Captain of Engineers and was sent to the coast of Florida to build a light-house. Here he suffered sunstroke which eventually led to blindness and death.

George Derby wrote under the pen names of John Phoenix and Squibob. Besides publishing many short articles and some cartoons he published a volume of sketches entitled "Legend of Phoenixiana," with a subtitle, "In the Name of the Prophet—Figs!" John Kendrick Bangs wrote a preface for this book and it had a very wide circulation for many years. The main library in Los Angeles has a copy of it. It contains sketches on every subject from fleas to astronomy. In one place he remarked that he could not use the editorial pronoun "we," because he did not have a tapeworm. He advised men to drink all the whiskey offered them at election time but never to vote for a candidate offering it.

McClatchy and His "Bee"

One of the greatest of California journalists began his work just at the close of this period which we are considering. Such a chronicle as this would not be complete without some mention of his character and unique work. James McClatchy, founder of "The Sacramento Bee," was a native of Ireland, which country he left in early youth upon the advice of a good Catholic priest, who could not bear to see so promising a youth crushed amid the great injustices that Ireland was then suffering. After following the baker's trade for a time in New York, his journalistic instincts led him to seek work with some of the New York newspapers. He finally entered the office of the New York "Tribune," and while in that employ became a fast friend of Horace Greeley, whose fearless spirit and keen mental vision proved a great inspiration to him.

It was upon Horace Greeley's advice that he came to California during the gold rush and wrote letters to the

"Tribune" at the request of Charles A. Dana. McClatchy and his companions of the journey came via Panama, taking a vessel from the Isthmus to Mazatlan. There they chartered the Dolphin to bring them to San Francisco. This vessel made a point but one hundred miles north of Cape San Lucas in twenty-eight days. Despairing of ever reaching Alta California at such a pace, McClatchy and twenty-eight others demanded to be put ashore, with the intention of walking to San Diego. The privations through which they passed nearly led to the death of all. At times all they had to eat was rattle-snake soup. Finally when nearly starved they found a raw-boned old horse whose flesh gave them enough strength to extricate themselves from the maw of the desert. McClatchy held out to the end of the journey but was in such a condition that it took him months to regain the likeness of his former self. When his strength returned, he made several attempts to find gold, but failing in this he made his way to Sacramento and worked on various papers there, among them the Daily and Weekly "Times," with Cornelius Cole in the editorial chair. His ability was soon recognized.

It was not until 1857 that he founded the "Bee." This was a very important event in the history of the State. It has been the one paper of all the great number of Californian newspapers fearlessly to stand for the rights of the people against monopolies and other injustices, and to hold uniformly to such a policy through all the intervening years. The name of "The Sacramento Bee" stands from ocean to ocean for a fearless policy and a fair deal. This policy is due to the character of the founder, James McClatchy, who let no power or no fear come between his paper and the right all the days of his life, and who passed down to his sons the tradition of a great paper. The "Bee" is a flourishing contradiction to the belief all too current in California that a newspaper cannot prosper and follow an honest and fearless policy.

The Martyr of the Freedom of the Press

In the early days of James McClatchy there was at least one other journalist who was equally fearless amid dangers even greater than those which McClatchy faced. This other hero of the pen not only stood for clean government but actually became a martyr of the cause. The name of James King of William, founder of the "San Francisco Bulletin," will stand as long as the history of the Pacific Slope is told, and be an inspiration to high endeavor to every journalist of the West.

James King was born in Georgetown, D. C., and early

assumed the title "of William" to distinguish himself from kinsmen of the same name, William being his father's given name. King was a man of very real culture, having eagerly sought knowledge wherever it could be found. He was acquainted with the best literature in Latin and English, could speak Spanish and French fluently, and German indifferently.

When but fifteen years of age he began his wanderings by going to Pittsburg to clerk in a store. After serving as a post office clerk he began his journalistic career by working on the "Expositor" and the "Washington Globe." One of King's older brothers was with Frémont in California. He urged James to come to California to go into business with him. James King of William embarked from New York for Valparaiso May 24, 1848, before the news of the discovery of gold had reached New York. While he was on his journey the brother who had sent for him perished.

Upon his arrival at Valparaiso he heard the news of the golden prospects toward which he was headed. He employed nine Chilenos at fixed wages to work for him in the gold fields. Upon their arrival at San Francisco, six of the nine deserted him. With his depleted force he hurried on to Hangtown and in three weeks they had found enough gold to pay all the expenses of the trip from Chile. Before long he seems to have tired of a miner's life and to have gone into Sacramento to do business with the firm of Hensley, Reading & Co. When autumn came he went East to secure capital to start a bank, and by December 5, 1849, he had opened a bank on Montgomery Street in San Francisco. This was one of the very first banks in San Francisco.

Every one liked and honored him, not only on account of his pleasing personality and person, and his intelligence, but also for his straightforward character. By 1851 he was able to bring his wife and four children West with him. In 1853 he sent a quarter of a million dollars by an agent to buy gold dust. Instead of following his orders, the agent invested this great sum in worthless mining stock. King ventured more to save the first, but it soon appeared that the whole was a total loss. Although King still had a narrow margin on which to do business, he closed his bank and paid all creditors lest he should lose some of their money. This took his entire fortune.

On October 8, 1855, he founded "The Daily Evening Bulletin" of San Francisco. At that time San Francisco was the victim of grafters of every kind. The city govern-

ment was run by them, society cringed before them; they went whither they would unashamed. The financial life of the city was on such a dishonest basis that no business investment was safe. Into this murky atmosphere a strong search-light was suddenly turned, and all sorts of creatures of darkness were caught in the midst of their vile acts. Having been closely connected with the business life of the city, King was able to expose dishonest firms and acts without mercy. He did not hesitate to give names, dates, and proofs. The political life of the city fared no better. In vain did the underworld threaten and slander. King was challenged to duels but refused to fight, saying that, were he killed, there would be no means of support for his wife and six children. Many credit him with being the man who turned public sentiment in California against dueling. King even defended suspected persons from the vigilantes until they be proven guilty. His enemies became many among the despoilers, but the people and all men of honor clung to him as the one hope amidst the almost universal corruption. The "Bulletin" advocated Sabbath observance, establishment of public schools, blessings of education, and attempted to render gambling, idleness and dueling unpopular. All that was lewd and vile was condemned without qualification.

The crisis came on May 14, 1856, when a political grafter whose past King had exposed shot him on the street. He lingered for six days while the whole city and state waited the outcome in awful suspense. In the meantime the last and greatest Vigilance Committee was gathered, the murderer and a companion were taken from the sheriff and his grafting crowd who had always managed to balk justice when a murder had been committed, and were held at the headquarters of the Vigilantes.

When the pain-racked body could no longer hold the brave spirit of James King of William, the whole state mourned and vowed vengeance on the assassins and all their ilk. The whole nation honored King's memory. It is seldom that a man meeting death at thirty-four years of age has come to be so widely or favorably known as was he.

The city and state raised a thirty-two thousand dollar subscription for his family as some weak token of the love and honor in which he was held, as the Vigilantes, with stern faces and a sterner resolve, hung his murderer within sight of King's funeral procession as it wound its way to Lone Mountain Cemetery.

So ends the story of California's journalistic pioneers. Each in his own way, though all too briefly, helped to tell the story of California and to form the story as it was told. May the future accord to each the honor that he so greatly deserved!